



CROATIAN AND SLOVENE MISSIONARIES AS INVENTORS AND EXPLORERS OF THE AMERICAN WEST AND MIDWEST

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In this paper we examine the works and lives of some Croatian and Slovene Catholic priests who worked as missionaries among American Indians. The American missionaries not only brought Christianity to the American Indians, they also became known as inventors and explorers, traveling especially in the American West and Midwest. The Croatians, Rev. Ivan Ratkaj and Rev. Ferdinand Konščak, were explorers of the American and Mexican West from the 1680s until the late 1760s. Father Konščak's detailed observations and measurements definitively confirmed that Baja California is not an island but a peninsula, which enabled further expeditions and discovery of the territory of what is today the State of California. The Slovenes, Bishop Frederick Baraga and Rev. Franz Pirc, worked among American Indians in the Midwest from the 1830s until the 1870s.

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TWO CROATIAN MISSIONARIES: IVAN RATKAJ, S. J. AND FERDINANDUS (CONSAGO) KONŠČAK, S. J.

Of the remarkable Jesuit explorers and geographers Croatia has produced, mention must be made of the following two:

Baron Ivan Ratkaj was born in Veliki Tabor, Croatia, on May 22, 1647. He served as a page at Kaiser Leopold's court, but in 1664 he entered the Jesuits' order. After he studied philoso-

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, I.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

phy in Graz (1667-1669), for some time he taught Latin in Gorizia and Zagreb. Then he returned to Graz to study theology in the period 1673-1676. He lived in Judenburg (1677) and Linz (1678) and in autumn traveled to Genoa on foot. From there he took a ship to Cádiz. Then he waited in Seville for two years to travel to Mexico. On July 11, 1680, a convoy of ships finally left. Ratkaj's ship started to sink, but the passengers were saved. He was able to continue his travels with the same convoy and finally came to Vera Cruz at the end of September 1680 with a group of other missionaries.

From late 1680 until his sudden death in 1683, he worked as a missionary and geographer among the Indians in Mexico. He wrote an interesting and valuable account of his travels, one of the first by a Croatian traveler to America, which is often cited. In 1683, he prepared a map entitled *Mappa circumiacentes regiones (tarahumaras)*.¹

On November 18, 1680, Ratkaj started his arduous and perilous journey toward Tarahumara, a region of one of the most primitive, savage Indian tribes. He stayed for several weeks in San Ignacio Coyachic, and in March 1681, he reached his missionary post at Pesiguechic, in the Sierra Madres of what is now southwestern Chihuahua.

In a letter to his superior in Austria, he describes in detail his labor in the missions, their organization, the Indians, and the area, where only a few Spanish military outposts with a few soldiers kept the hostile Indians in check. It was his opinion that a German Imperial general "with only three thousand Germans and five hundred Croatian hussars could without any difficulty get hold of the whole North America."²

At his mission, Ratkaj learned the difficult Indian language. In Carichic, a mission with a better climate, he worked until his untimely death (he was only 36) in December 1683. It is possible, however, to reconstruct from various sources that the Croatian missionary was killed by an Indian who gave him poisoned water to drink when Ratkaj was thirsty because Ratkaj had forbidden what he considered to be immoral pagan night dances and drinking orgies.³ His contemporaries, for example Jose Neumann and Eusebius Franciscus Kino, did not confirm his violent death.

Although Ratkaj's missionary activities took place in what is presently Mexican territory, his work was significant to the later development of the American Southwest. The missions in Tarahumara were an important link in the chain of missions that spread across Sonora and Lower California to the Pacific. Without Jesuit missions in Tarahumara, Pimeria, Sonora, and especially Lower California, the development of today's California and neighboring states would have been much delayed.⁴

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, J.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

A second Jesuit who conducted geographic investigations was Ferdinand Konščak, who was born in Varaždin, Croatia, on December 3, 1703. On October 22, 1719, he entered the Jesuit order. After studying theology and philosophy in Graz he became a priest in 1723. In 1726 he taught Latin at Jesuit's College in Zagreb and in 1728, in Buda. At the end of 1729 he left by way of Genoa to Cádiz and then in December 1730, left for America and by way of Havana (Cuba) sailed to Vera Cruz on April 19, 1731. After some days he left for Mexico City, where he prepared for missionary work.⁵

At the request of his superiors, he went to Baja California, probably in 1732. His destination was the Mission of San Ignacio (de) Kadakaaman, about 1,250 miles from Mexico City. At that time, there were already about ten missions in Baja California. During the first five years he spent in San Ignacio, he participated in the work of different missions. He fulfilled his duties as a priest and missionary by teaching the Indians about Christianity. He also wrote a history of the missions. Father Konščak became well versed in the languages of the Cochimie tribe and some others. In 1747, he was appointed superior of the Mission of San Ignacio. In 1748, he was promoted to visitor of all the missions in Baja California. He baptized about one thousand Indians over several years and also founded the Mission of Santa Gertrudis.⁶

In addition to his missionary work, Konščak gave the Indians some practical knowledge, even teaching them some crafts. He collected all kinds of information concerning geography and Indian tribes. Among the natural sciences he had a great knowledge of mathematics, geology, geography and biology. He planned roads as well as the building of dams and irrigation canals. Konščak's main field of interest, however, was geography and the exploration of unknown parts of Baja California. At the request of his superiors, he organized and participated in three great expeditions into the northern regions of Baja California. As a result of these expeditions, the belt of missions constantly moved northward until all Baja California was conquered. Father Konščak was therefore rightly considered one of the greatest pioneers of California. The records of 1755 mention him as the superior of San Ignacio.

Vigorous and constantly active, Ferdinand Konščak finished his missionary, charitable, exploratory, ascetic and saintly work at the age of 55.⁷ He died in San Ignacio on September 10, 1759, having lived in the Jesuit order for over 39 years, 27 of them as a missionary in Baja California, including 22 years in San Ignacio. He was buried in the cemetery of San Ignacio. For many years, his Indian friends made pilgrimages to his grave. His tomb was then forgotten until the late 1950s.

The Exploratory Expeditions of Ferdinand Konšćak

It has already been mentioned that Ferdinand Konšćak organized and conducted exploratory expeditions at the request of his superiors, in accordance with the king of Spain's aspiration to extend the boundaries of Spanish possessions in America.

In 1746, Juan Antonio Balthaser (1697-1763), the visitor of Baja California, asked Konšćak to organize and lead his first expedition, in order to reconfirm that Baja California is not an island but a peninsula – as previously established by Francesco de Ulloa in 1539, Eusebio Francisco Kino (1645-1711) in 1702, and the Jesuit Juan de Ugarte (1662-1730) in 1721. Another aim of this expedition was to find sources of potable water, needed by future missions and Spanish military camps. Konšćak also wanted to explore the east coast of Baja California from Cape de Las Virgenes to the mouth of the Colorado River.

An expedition consisting of soldiers and Indian converts set out in boats from Loreto on June 9, 1746, and sailed north along the gulf coast. They took notes on maritime conditions, geography, natural history and ethnology, primarily looking for sources of potable water, pastures and suitable places for an anchorage or port. Father Konšćak and his expedition arrived at the mouth of the Colorado River at the end of the 750-mile Gulf of California, where they spent a few days recording geographical observations. The expedition then returned via the same route and arrived in Loreto on July 25, 1746, after forty-six days. Their detailed observations and measurements definitively confirmed that Baja California is not an island. Father Konšćak was able to write the following: "The Gulf really ends at the mouth of the Colorado River." Just like that, the way for Spanish and Christian expansion into what is now California lay open. So significant was Konšćak's exploration that Bancroft calls it "the most important event" of that period.⁸

The data Father Konšćak collected during this expedition enabled him to draw maps of the explored and bordering areas, introducing some new names and localities. The geographic map that Konšćak prepared after his first expedition is entitled *Seño de Californiy y su costa oriental nuevamente descubierta de las Virgenes, hasta su terminos, que ed el Rio Colorado, año de 1746 por el Pe. Ferdinando Consag de la Compa. de HIS Missionero, en la California*. His map was sent to the royal authorities in Madrid and was the basis for other maps of the areas along the Gulf of California.

Konšćak was resolute not only in organization and observation, but, likewise, in literary composition; for he left to po-

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, J.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

sterity a diary of his expeditions. Konščak's attention to detail may be judged from the opening in his diary:

*On the ninth day of June, 1746, we departed in four canoes from San Carlos, which lies in twenty-eight degrees north latitude, the shallowness of the water in this harbor admitting only canoes. The watering places of St. Anne are three leagues from it.*⁹

A manuscript copy of this diary in Spanish is at the British Museum in London. In 1748, parts of the journal were first published in Mexico City in a work by Jose Antonio Villaseñor y Sanchez, *Theatro Americano, description general de la Nueva España*, and in a second edition dated 1952. In 1757, Konščak's diary and geographic map were included in *Noticia de la California* by the Jesuits Andrés Marcos Burriel and Miguel Venegas. This was the first and a very important book on California, published during Konščak's lifetime. It was translated into English in 1759, Dutch in 1671, French in 1766 and German in 1769-70.

In 1748, when Konščak was appointed visitor of all missions in California, full of vigor, he proceeded to explore this country in hopes of finding suitable sites for new missions, for "his Croatian energy would not allow him to rest or even to proceed less rapidly."¹⁰ He pushed out an ever-widening ring to the north, explored the terrain, examined conditions, and discovered the vital spring without which a mission could not be founded in the California desert. By 1751, he had collected all information about the geography, peculiarities of the country and the Indian tribes.

At the request of the provincial of New Spain, Juan Antonio Balthasar, F. Konščak organized a second expedition. With a detachment of Spanish soldiers led by Captain Don Fernando Rivera y Moncada and a group of Indians, he set out from San Ignacio on May 22, 1751, and traveled northward by land with horses, mules and large quantities of supplies. The expedition passed the Sierra San Pedro Martir and other mountain ranges that divide the Californian peninsula into the accessible western and the almost impassable eastern regions. They traveled along dry valleys beside the Pacific Ocean, all the way to 30° N, north of the Bay Sebastián Vizcaíno, at about the latitude of present-day Punta Pieta. Father Konščak systematically collected information about the local Indians, flora and fauna. He also searched for sources of potable water to meet the needs of future missions and established friendly relations with the local Indians.

In these dry and mountainous regions, there was no suitable location to establish a new mission. The journey was arduous over the steep slopes and rugged areas. Some members of the expedition lost their lives. On July 8, 1751, the exhausted travelers returned to the village of La Piedad, north of San Ignacio. According to the historian Peter Masten Dun-

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
 GOD. 11 (2002),
 BR. 4-5 (60-61),
 STR. 761-783

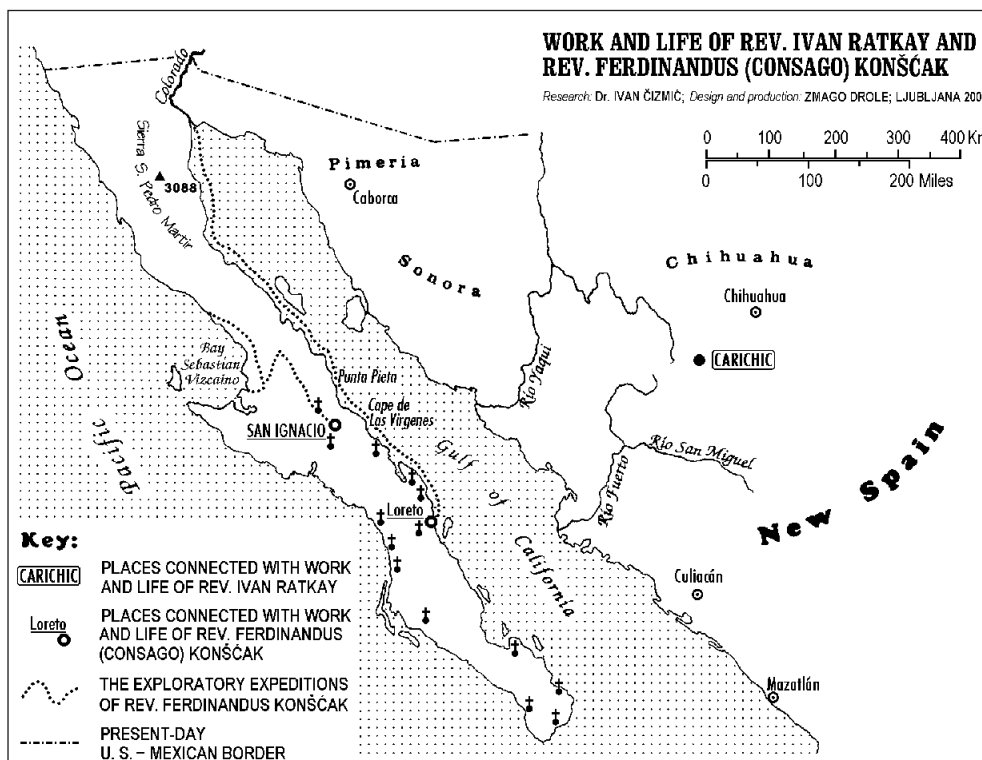
ČIZMIĆ, I.,
 KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
 CROATIAN AND...

ne, this second expedition made Konščak the greatest explorer of California.

To serve the interests of the Spanish crown, Father Konščak embarked on a third expedition at the behest of the chief Jesuit visitor of Mexico, Augustin Carta, again accompanied by Captain Don F. Rivera y Moncada and his soldiers. He visited and explored some islands off the eastern coast of the gulf and gave them new names.¹¹ He covered hundreds of miles on horseback during this journey, enduring hunger and thirst. It is not known whether the journal written on this third expedition has been preserved somewhere.

Konščak recorded in his journals various geographical data needed for navigation: gulfs, potential harbors, depths of coastal waters, submerged reefs, visible reefs and islands. He also provided information on the directions and velocities of winds.

In the well-known *Jesuit Relations, Baja California 1716-1762*, published in 1984, E. Burrus wrote that "... Ferdinand Konščak, better known to the historians of Mexico as Fernando Consag, was the most eminent explorer, geographer and cartographer of Baja California." He also said that "... what Kino accomplished for northwest New Spain and especially Pimeria Alta, Consag accomplished for the region of the peninsula."¹²



FREDERICK IRENEJ BARAGA (1797-1868)

Frederick Baraga was born on June 29, 1797, in the village of Mala vas pri Dobrniču, in then Carniola in the Habsburg Monarchy, in what is today the Republic of Slovenia. After studying law at the University of Vienna (1816-1921), he entered Ljubljana Catholic Seminary and became a Catholic priest. He served as chaplain in Šmartin (today named Stražišče) pri Kranju and Metlika.

He left for America in October 1830 and made his way by steamboat and stagecoaches to Cincinnati, where he arrived on January 19, 1831. He worked for a short time among the German immigrants of Cincinnati and then left to become a missionary among the Ottawa Indians in the Great Lakes region.¹³ His journey to the North, which he undertook in April, was a continued mission. Wherever he met a few Catholics he preached to them. From Miamisburg he went six miles into the woods to visit a single Catholic family; and nine miles for the sake of one poor Irishman, who had not seen a priest for fifty years, and now was eighty-one and almost deaf and blind. At Dayton he met with Bishop Fenwick and continued his journey to Detroit.

Arbre Croche (today named Harbor Springs) in northern Michigan¹⁴ was the only mission in the large Cincinnati diocese in which only Indians lived. The move of the Indians to Arbre Croche around 1740 was a result of wars among Indian tribes, especially wars among Ottawas and Cherokees.

Baraga continued the mission of his predecessors. During the first years he repeated their ways when he tried to make connections with unbaptized Indians. For example in 1832, when he visited Beaver Island on Lake Michigan, he flew a white flag when he was still in the boat to announce his arrival. When he got to Beaver Island, he at first went to the chief's cabin and, after he gave gifts to the chief's family, asked the chief to assemble the seniors. At a meeting of the seniors he told the Indians about his intentions. Finally, after his third or fourth visit, he received permission to build a small church in the woods far from the settlement.

While performing his priestly duties, Baraga traveled widely along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. During the winter period of 1832-33, he left on snowshoes from Arbre Croche towards Mackinac Strait (between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron). In spring 1833 he survived his first ride in a canoe on stormy Lake Michigan, when they paddled to Little Detroit Island.¹⁵

In September 1833 he left Arbre Croche for Grand River (today named Grand Rapids) in southern Michigan, where he served among the Otchipwe Indians until February 1835. Then

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, I.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

he lived in Cottrellville (today Marine City, north of Detroit). Later Bishop Fenwick of Detroit, asked him to serve in places near Lake Superior. On July 27, 1935, he moved to La Pointe in Wisconsin and ministered to the Ojibwa Indians, who speak one of the dialects of the Ottawa Indian language. La Pointe lies on Madeline Island in Chequamegon Bay on the south-eastern shore of Lake Superior.

At La Pointe, Baraga had to overcome a lack of materials for teaching the catechism and preparing masses. They could not be bought in America, he could get them only from the Leopoldin Society in Vienna, which supported missionaries.

During his first years in La Pointe, Baraga got into financial difficulties because Bishop Rese usurped part of the money, which came from Austria to Baraga's address, for the needs of Baraga's missions. Therefore Baraga left for Europe to solve his financial problems and to arrange to have books that he had written published. In September 29, 1836, he left from La Pointe by way of New York, Liverpool and London, to Paris, where he submitted books in the Ottawa and Ojibwe languages for publication. Then he traveled by way of Lyon to Rome, where he was accepted for an audience by Pope Gregory XVI; finally he traveled through Trieste to Slovenia. There he met his sister Amalia and visited places in which he served before he left for America. After that he went to Vienna, where he was a guest at a reception given by Austrian Emperor Ferdinand and Empress Maria Ana.

Later he was invited to dinner with Austrian Chancellor Klemens Wenzel Metternich, who promised that from then on, one of Metternich's closest aides would take care of the money to be sent to him; while the enterprise of Ramsay Crooks in New York would take care of the money to be sent to him from America. Ramsay Crooks was a fur trader and an owner of a shipping company on the Great Lakes. After he took care of everything, Baraga left for America by way of Paris and Le Havre. He returned to La Pointe on October 8, 1837.

In 1838 Bishop Rese named Baraga vicar general for the Lake Superior region. This region became a little bit smaller after one part was taken to be added to the newly established diocese for northern Wisconsin, with its seat in Milwaukee. Baraga stayed in La Pointe until 1843 and then left for ten years, establishing an Indian mission, L'Anse, in the almost unsettled region of Keweenaw Bay (around 110 miles east of La Pointe), where he served until 1853.

In the winter of 1845-1846 Baraga traveled on his missions to visit the Indians in Lac Vieux Deserts and Lac du Flambeau. Baraga made this long journey on snowshoes and, in a letter dated January 24, 1846, described the hardships to be endured in that mode of traveling.

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, J.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

In 1846 Baraga planned another long journey. He wrote, "I have to make this winter a far longer journey, that is from L'Anse to La Pointe and Fond du Lac and return a distance of about six hundred and ninety miles. I will begin this journey on the 4th of February and hope to be back again before the end of March. I am going to Fond du Lac, Minn., to make arrangements for the building of a church there..."¹⁶

In 1847 Baraga made several trips into the northern part of Upper Michigan. He promised the people of the region that he would come three times a year until they got their own priest. In the ensuing years Baraga made many trips on foot to the mining outposts in Upper Michigan. Time and again he plodded forty, fifty or more miles to bring consolation to some dying person or to fulfill some other part of his priestly ministry. Many times he narrowly escaped death when caught in violent snowstorms.¹⁷

Baraga traveled over Lake Superior by boat also. In the fall of 1846, Baraga sailed from La Pointe to Grand Portage. He engaged an Indian, Louis Gaudin, to go with him. They sailed in a small, eighteen-foot long fishing boat with a mast and sail, without keel or centerboard. Such a boat was very unsafe to sail with on a large lake. When they started from La Pointe, the villagers laughed at them for attempting to make the journey. They said it would take the sailors a month to make the voyage, as they would have to keep close to the shore all the way, going first west some seventy miles to the end of the lake and then doubling back along the northern coast of Lake Superior. This way they would travel 200 miles.

However Father Baraga and his guide decided to cross the lake at Sand Island, which is about forty miles wide at that point. By doing so they exposed themselves to a great danger, as a high wind might arise when they were out on the open lake and engulf their frail boat. They set sail on an unusually calm day. Baraga steered and Gaudin rowed the boat. Before they got midway a heavy west wind arose and the lake grew very rough. They were constantly driven leeward and when they finally reached the north shore they were at least thirty miles east of their intended landing place, having made a very perilous sail of seventy miles during that day. They landed on the north shore about six o'clock in the evening and they arrived none too soon, since the storm was increasing every moment; high waves with white caps, which would surely have capsized their boat. After spending the night on the shore they continued their journey the next day, and in two days arrived at Grand Portage. They made the whole journey in three days.

In 1853 a new period of Baraga's life started. On July 29 of that year, on the suggestion of the first Baltimore Council,

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, I.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

Pope Pius IX established a vicariate apostolic in Upper Michigan. Baraga was named apostolic vicar and was consecrated to be bishop. As bishop he at first administrated the vicariate apostolic of Upper Michigan, which became a diocese with its seat in Sault Ste. Marie in 1857.¹⁸

Shortly after he became a bishop, Baraga issued two circulars, one in English (*Episcopal letter*) and another one in the Otchipwe language (*Kitchi-Mekatewikwaniaie*). The ten-page circular of 1853 in the Otchipwe language is the first and only bishop's circular written in any of the Indian languages in the United States of America during the 19th century.¹⁹

Soon after he became a bishop, Baraga left for his second journey back to Europe on November 15, 1853. He wanted to get as many colleagues as possible to work in his new diocese. He left from Cincinnati through New York, Liverpool, Paris, Munich to Vienna and traveled to Ljubljana and visited places where he had worked in Slovenia, and then to Rome, where Pope Pius IX gave him an audience (February 27 and March 5, 1854). Then he returned to Ljubljana and by way of St. Andra in Lavantal visited Slovene Bishop Anton Martin Slomšek. After that he left for Vienna and, as representative of the American Catholic Church, was present at the marriage festivities of Emperor Franz Joseph and Bavarian Princess Elizabeth (April 23, 1854). Then he returned to Sault Ste. Marie, where he lived as bishop until 1866.²⁰

During this period he traveled a lot, especially in the territories of his diocese. In February 1858 he drove in a sledge, which was pulled, according to Indian custom, by two or three mighty dogs. He traveled from Sault Ste. Marie along the northern shore of Lake Huron, through Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo to Cincinnati, over 50 miles daily. He returned along the western shore of Lake Huron (through Detroit). On this trip alone he traveled over 950 miles.

Bishop Baraga visited the fishermen, who were mostly French Canadians and half breeds, in Mackinac and St. Ignace in February 1860. As he wrote in his diary, he started his journey on February 6, 1860, accompanied by two men, who carried necessary provisions and the blankets to keep them warm at night. The weather was very cold. The bishop got a ride of three miles on a cariole and then, having put on his snowshoes, he traveled quite a distance. The bishop and his party traveled through the forest until noon. At noon they kindled the fire and cooked tea; and this tea, with a piece of bread, was their dinner. After dinner they resumed their journey and by evening reached the wigwam of an Indian chief, where they spent the night, exhausted and cold. They had traveled 20 miles that day.

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, J.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

The next morning, the bishop's traveling companions prepared a frugal breakfast consisting only of bread and tea. Bishop Baraga traveled again all day on snowshoes until the evening, when the bishop and his traveling companions prepared for camping by shoveling the snow away with their snowshoes and then brought spruce boughs and spread them on the snow, which was the bishop's bed for that night. Then they chopped some wood and made a large fire, for it was very cold.

On the third day, Baraga wrote in his diary, "How old age has affected me! Formerly, when I was as yet a missionary at Lake Superior, I could travel continuously for weeks without feeling fatigued. Now a journey of two or three days tires me out."²¹

Early in the morning of the third day they started walking, emerged from the woods by 10:30 A.M. and arrived at Lake Huron, which was entirely covered with ice. From this point they could see the country surrounding the mission of St. Ignace, from which they were still 15 miles away. After they had walked a short distance on the ice, they were pleased to see a convoy of over 20 sleighs that had come from Point St. Ignace and Mackinac to meet them. The sleighs brought the bishop to the Indian settlement of St. Ignace.

After performing his duties as bishop for eight days, he left for home on February 23. The Indians conveyed him again across the ice to where the trail entered the forest. After a cold and difficult two days and nights, he reached home.

On May 1, 1860, Bishop Baraga left Sault Ste. Marie to go to Portage Lake. On the second day of travel, at White Fish Point, the boat was detained in an immense ice field for twenty hours. Finally the wind shifted and drove the ice out, opening a channel for the boat. At Portage Lake (or Houghton) there was a pretty large church, which, however, had become too small because of the influx of miners, many of whom were Catholics.

Portage Lake was about two miles from what became the city of Baraga, county seat of Baraga County. The post office of the mission was named after an old Indian chief, Assinins, who lived there in Baraga's time and assisted him in compiling his publications about the Indians.²²

In 1865 Baraga moved the seat of his diocese to Marquette and lived there during the last three years of his life (1866-1868). On October 9, 1866, he had a brain stroke while at the Second Baltimore Council. He returned to Marquette, where he died January 19, 1868.²³

Baraga brought Christianity to many of the Otchipwe and Ottawa Indians. He also helped with the economic and cultural development of American Indians. For example, in 1844

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, I.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

he bought land in L'Anse, divided it into 50-100-square-meter lots and built on it a little church, a building for a missionary school and fifteen wooden houses for families. In 1848 there were already thirty-three Indian families settled in L'Anse and in 1850, forty-two families. Each family also had its own part of the farmland. The farmland was protected with a common fence; each of the family members had his own part of the field to work on. The one-story houses were small, but each had its own stove for heating and cooking, some furniture and some sewing implements. In this way, Baraga tried to gather the Indians in one place, organize them in one community and protect them from harmful influences, such as merchants and traders with alcohol.²⁴

The greatest danger for his missionary work Baraga saw in the Indian inclination towards alcoholism. He even established societies to promote abstinence. Such a society was established in 1846 in Baraga's mission L'Anse, with Bishop Lefevre present. The members were given special diplomas that were printed in Detroit. The promise of abstinence was written on the diploma in the Indian language.²⁵

Protestant missionaries tried to convince the American authorities to resettle American Indians from the Lake Superior regions to the Great Plains in order to geographically separate them from Catholic French Canadians. Baraga resisted the idea and said that there was enough room for them in the Lake Superior region. Also, the pioneer of American ethnology, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, propagated the idea that it would be in the best interest of the Indians to move them to the Indian reservations west of the Mississippi River. Baraga even wrote a letter to Schoolcraft asking him whether Indians who bought land with the Land Office – those were the Indians in Baraga's mission – could work on this land forever. Baraga asked also whether the Indians who were owners of the land and were working on this land could become U.S. citizens. Schoolcraft sent this letter to an official of the Land Office, P. Butterfield, and added that they should be aware of the importance of the decision. The Land Office never responded.²⁶

Bishop Baraga will always rank with the foremost authors in American Indian literature. He learned Indian languages and wrote a dictionary and a grammar book on the language of the Otchipwe. He studied the Otchipwe language for twenty years and published the grammar in Detroit in 1850.²⁷ Three years later he published the dictionary in Cincinnati.²⁸ It was reprinted in 1878, 1966, and 1978. Both the grammar and dictionary were most highly prized and constantly used by Indian missionaries and others.²⁹

Baraga also wrote books in the Ottawa Indian language. He wrote an Ottawa prayer book, which includes prayers, re-

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, J.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

ligious songs and Catechism, and published it in Detroit in 1832 (*Otawa Anamie-Misinaigan*). In 1837 he published in Paris a book on the life of Jesus (*Jesus Obimadisiwin Ajonda Aking*). He translated and published both books in the language of the Otchipwe Indians. The last of Baraga's books in Otchipwe languages was *Eternal Truths* (*Kagoge Debwewinan Kagining*), which he published when he was bishop in Cincinnati in 1855.

Baraga also wrote a book on the manners and customs of the Indians, which he published in German³⁰ and in French³¹ in 1837. A shortened version of this book was also published in Slovenian. This book represents an ethnological study of Indian culture. He described Indians from the anthropological point of view, their material culture (what they were wearing, housing, food, artisan products, hunting, fishing), their social life (family life, rearing of the children, forms of government) and the other aspects of their life (religion, magicians, diseases and medicines). His writings were based on his own observations, which were a result of his travels and life among American Indians. Frederick Baraga did not disappear from the memories of Indians along the Great Lakes.

The memories of Baraga are kept especially in Marquette, where the Slovenian American community established the Bishop Baraga Collection and where historical materials necessary to continue the process toward beatification are stored.

FRANC PIRC (1785-1880)

The Slovene missionary Franc Pirc (who usually spelled his name Francis Pierz in the United States) was born in Kamnik, Carniola, in what is today the Republic of Slovenia, on November 20, 1785. In the fall of 1810 he enrolled in the Seminary in Ljubljana to begin his studies for the priesthood. Three years later, on March 13, 1813, he was ordained by Bishop Kovačič. His theological studies coincided with the Napoleonic creation of the Illyrian Provinces, which gave him the chance to study French; this later proved very useful to him for communication with some North American Indian tribes. Father Pirc's assignments in the Diocese of Ljubljana were as assistant pastor in Kranjska gora and Fužine, and as pastor in Peče and Podbrezje.³²

Having seen the economic need of the peasants in the Slovene ethnic territories, Pirc wrote a handbook for fruit growers, *Kranjski vrtnar, ali poduzhenje v kratkim veliko sadnih dreves sarediti, jih s'zeplenjam poshlahtnini, in lepe verte k'velikim pridu sasaditi* (*The Carnolian Gardener, or a Textbook on How to Successfully Plant and Grow Fruit Trees*), published in 1830-34. To further help tree growers, in 1834 he published a pamphlet, *Podučenje kako se morejo te škodljive gosenice končati* (*How to Get*

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, I.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

Rid of Insects). In appreciation of his great contributions to farming, the *Kranjska kmetijska družba* awarded him a special medal of honor in 1842.³³

Franc Pirc became interested in missionary work in North America through the letters of Frederick Baraga that were published in the *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung in Kaiserthume Österreich* (Reports of the Leopoldin Society of the Austrian Empire). Baraga's letters, bursting as they were with zeal, kindled in him the desire to become a missionary and to devote the rest of his life to the welfare of the Indians. Franc Pirc traveled to America because Bishop Baraga asked him to do that on June 7, 1835. When he sailed to the New World in 1835, he was nearly fifty years old. He traveled by way of Vienna and Le Havre to New York and then settled in Detroit, where he arrived September 15. His first job as Catholic Missionary to the American Indians was in La Croix (Cross Village) in northern Michigan.³⁴

It is interesting to note that Pirc – similar to Baraga – during the first years of his work in American missions followed in the footsteps of his predecessors as far as making connections with the Indians. So he, when he first visited an Indian settlement, went to the chief and gave little presents to the villagers (tobacco, sweets for kids, needles, sewing cotton, etc.). After that he made known his intentions to Christianize the tribe. He gave the villagers ten minutes to decide. If the answer was positive, Rev. Pirc started to teach adults and children prayers, catechism, singing and to read and write, and later he also explained to them the Evangelium.³⁵

In the summer of 1838 he was transferred to Sault Ste. Marie, from which he traveled through the Indian settlements of La Pointe, in the western part of the Lake Superior region. In 1838 Baraga, who was then already vicar general for the whole region of Lake Superior, gave him the mission in Grand Portage on the northeastern shore of Lake Superior. From there Reverend Pirc established a new mission in Fort William (today Thunder Bay) at the Canadian-U.S. border. In the summer of 1839 he left on Baraga's orders to Arbre Croche, where he worked until he left for Minnesota in 1857.

From Arbre Croche, Pirc visited his missions on Lake Superior every summer and traveled great distances.³⁶ For example, he wrote to his friend Andrej Skopec in September 1841 that he had traveled that year 1,719 miles on foot and that he was going to travel 600 more before winter. He was then 56 years old. He traveled even more on horseback or by canoe. On his travels Rev. Pirc took with him two blankets and a tent in which he said mass whenever he needed to provide a service for the Indians. When he traveled on horseback or by ca-

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, J.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

noe he was accompanied by a cook who took care of the food and a helper to carry the canoe over falls.³⁷

That Pirc had to travel great distances was nothing special, but in the 1850s missionaries had to overcome even more troubles than in the early 1830s, when Reverend Baraga started his missions. During the early 1830s Indians lived near the shore where they could fish, so Baraga could visit most of the Indian settlements from October to May on the frozen lake. When Pirc started his missionary work, Indians who had been converted to Christianity lived on the shore of Lake Superior, while the non-Christian Indians lived deep in the woods. Therefore, during the winter period, Pirc had to walk great distances on snowshoes.³⁸

When the Diocese of St. Paul was established in Minnesota in 1857, Pirc left for Minnesota. There was no permanent missionary there yet. Minnesota was then completely wilderness, where 20,000 white settlers lived together with 100,000 nomadic Indians. Minnesota became a Territory in 1849 and was raised to statehood in 1858. Pirc, who spent 31 years in Minnesota, was one of its pioneers. In June 1852, Bishop Cretin from St. Paul gave him the Indian region between St. Cloud and Duluth to take care of with missionary work. In this region he established a new missionary station in Crow Wing. From there he ministered to the Indians in Mille Lacs, Cass Lake, Red Lake and further north (to the Canadian border).³⁹ He was instrumental in establishing many settlements in Minnesota, for example Belle Prairie, Sauk Rapids, and Swan River (today named Sobieski).⁴⁰ He invited new settlers to Minnesota in many articles in the newspaper *Wahrheits Freunde*, published in Cincinnati. He wanted immigrants to come to Minnesota as farmers. Pirc was also known as an ardent supporter of Central European immigrants, because he was deeply disappointed by the treatment of the Indians by the Anglo-Saxons. He thought that colonists from continental Europe would work for the Indians' welfare. In this effort, Pirc became the spiritual father of the first group settlement of colonists from Slovenia, in St. Stephen.⁴¹

In 1864 he visited Slovenia and convinced many Slovenian priests to work in Indian missions in America, among them Joseph Buh, Ignacij Tomazin, Jakob Trobec and Aloysius Plut. He returned to America, where he stayed until 1873.⁴² During that period Pirc provided missions not only among the Indians but also among white settlers. He established many mission stations for them: St. Joseph, St. Jacob, Richmond, Rich Prairie, Little Falls and Sauk Center. He was very beloved among German, Austrian and Slovenian settlers in Minnesota. Settlers in Rich Prairie named their settlement after him, Pierz settlement.

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
 GOD. 11 (2002),
 BR. 4-5 (60-61),
 STR. 761-783

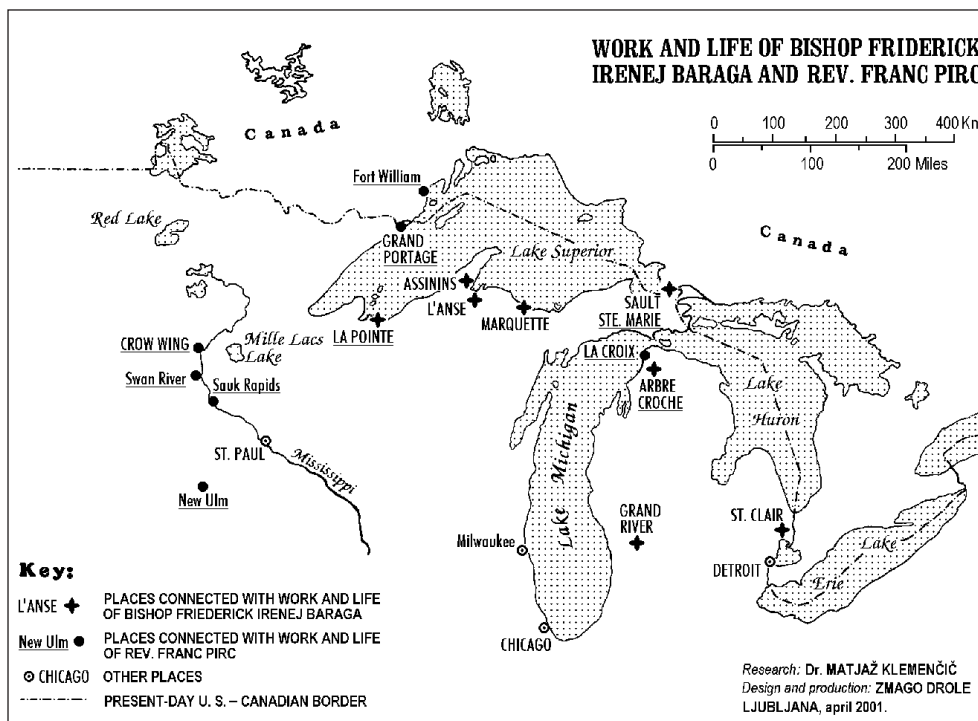
ČIZMIĆ, I.,
 KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
 CROATIAN AND...

The township of Pierz, with more than 1,000 inhabitants, still exists today.⁴³

After his health started to deteriorate, Pirc left for his homeland on September 3, 1873. He was 88 years old. At first he lived in Kamnik; but in 1874 he moved to Ljubljana, where he died in January 1880 when he was 94 years old.⁴⁴

Pirc worked as a missionary among the Ottawa, Ojibwe, Otchipwe and Winnebago Indians. The Ottawa lived in different centers of the Michigan Upper Peninsula. Ojibwe and Otchipwe lived on the northern shores of Lake Huron and Lake Superior and in northern Minnesota. The Winnebago lived in central Minnesota and southern Wisconsin. The Ojibwe were in permanent wars with the Sioux tribe, who lived in northwestern Minnesota. Therefore Pirc did not have many contacts with the Sioux.⁴⁵

In addition to his missionary endeavors, Pirc tried to improve the cultural and economic status of the Indians. He learned the languages of the natives and even wrote poems in their languages. He established many schools in Indian settlements and taught both old and young Indians to read in their own languages. He took care of their health, using homeopathic methods and even gave them medicines. When a small-pox epidemic broke out among Indians in northern Michigan, Pirc himself vaccinated hundreds of Indians and saved their lives.



DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, J.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

Nomadic Indian tribes with whom Pirc came in contact lived exclusively from hunting and fishing. Pirc tried to help them to start farming. Where opportunities existed for development of fishing, he helped Indians by getting them good fishing nets. From the Slovene ethnic territories he imported seeds of different field crops and vegetables and also farming tools, which he gave free of charge to Indian farmers. He also taught them different trades. He was the most successful in northern Michigan, where the Ottawa developed successful farming, to the point that they sold food to neighboring white settlements.⁴⁶ When Pirc left Arbre Croche he left flourishing Indian communities in which all the inhabitants lived in nice houses they had built themselves. In a short period he also contributed to the prosperity of Indians in Grand Portage, in northern Minnesota on the north shore of Lake Superior. Pirc in this way contributed to a far better future for those Indians than if the U.S. government had resettled them in Oklahoma.⁴⁷

Pirc tried to protect American Indians from abuse, especially from those in the liquor and fur trades. Soon after he came to Minnesota he succeeded in preventing a war between the Ojibwe and Winnebago tribes. During this mediation his life was endangered. In 1862, Ojibwe Indians were ready to start a war against white settlers by attacking at Crow Wing. Pirc succeeded in stopping their rebellion, which would have meant the end of the tribe. A little later Sioux Indians started an open rebellion and destroyed the settlement of New Ulm. The American army stopped this rebellion and cruelly punished the rebels. Pirc tried unsuccessfully to mediate with General Sibley to mitigate the punishment. Because of this he was nicknamed Ganino Dec (Good Heart) by the Indians.

Pirc knew the art of politics very well and he tried to establish good connections with the governmental representatives of the United States. He was well known for his successful attempts to promote the economic and cultural development of northern Michigan and, above all, for his work in Minnesota. As a Catholic missionary, Pirc received support for his work from the Austrian Leopoldin Society, which financed American missionaries. The Austrian regime was not at all liked by the Americans, however. The United States saw in Austria the main defender of reactionary forces in Europe. The United States held diplomatic relations with Austria at the lowest possible level. Therefore many Americans who were adherents of the Evangelical Christian Church did not like the work of those who were getting the official support of Austrian authorities and organizations like the Leopoldin Society.⁴⁸

Pirc was aware of those dilemmas. He also held very conservative views. In spite of all this he tried to influence

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, I.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

American politics with regard to the Indians. It is interesting to note that he wrote letters to American president John Tyler in 1843 demanding recognition of the rights of American Indians as American citizens.

Pirc wrote a book in German about American Indians, *Die Indianer in Nord – Amerika, ihre Lebensweise, Sitten, Gebräuche usw.* (*The Way of Life of the Indians of North America*, St. Louis, 1855). There is considerable difference between Baraga's books on American Indians and Pirc's books on the same topics. Pirc wrote almost exclusively on the basis of his own experience with the Indians and only a little bit on American culture.⁴⁹

For this paper the authors followed the work and lives of several prominent Croatian and Slovene missionaries to the American Indians. Their work as missionaries involved a great deal of difficult and dangerous travel, which we have highlighted here.

NOTES

¹ *Der Neue Welt-Bott.* (J. Stöcklein, Ed.). (Augsburg and Grätz, 1726), I, pp. 77-84; Msgr. D. Krmpotić, "Ferdinand Konščak". *Znameniti i zaslužni Hrvati, 925-1925.* (Zagreb, 1925), p. 138.

² *Der Neue Welt-Bott ...*, pp. 81-84; *Croatian Almanac for 1950.* (Pittsburgh, 1950), p. 73; Stanonik, Ivan Ratkaj ..., pp. 20-21.

³ Prpić, *The Croatian Immigrants in America* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971), p. 38.

⁴ Prpić, *The Croatian Immigrants in America ...*, 39.

⁵ Miroslav Vanino, "Ferdinand Konščak S. J. misionar i geograf Kalifornije (1703-1759)" *Vrela i prinosi*, Vol. II. (Sarajevo, 1993), pp. 103-118; Janez Stanonik, "Ferdinand Konščak." *Slovenska izseljenska književnost 2: Severna Amerika* (Janja Žitnik in Helga Glušič, Eds.). (Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, Založba ZRC in Založba Rokus, 1999), p. 416.

⁶ Ernest J. Burrus, S. J.: *Jesuit Relations, Baja California, 1716-1762.* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1984), p. 36.

⁷ Francisco Zevallos, S. J.: *The Apostolic Life of Fernando Consag, Explorer of Lower California* (Translated and annotated, with an introduction by Manuel P. Servin). (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1968), p. 30.

⁸ Peter M. Dunne, "Lower California an Island." *Mid America*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (January 1953), pp. 39-42; H. H. Bancroft: *The Works.* Vol. XV: History of the North Mexican States. (San Francisco, 1884), pp. 462-63.

⁹ Adam S. Eterovich: *Croatians in California 1849-1999.* (San Carlos, Ca.: Ragusan Press, 2000), p. 22.

¹⁰ Peter M. Dunne: *Black Robes in Lower California.* (Berkley: University of California, 1952), p. 376.

¹¹ H. R. Wagner: *The Cartography of the Northwest Coast of America to the Year 1800*, vol. I. (Berkley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1937), p. 153.

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GOD. 11 (2002),
BR. 4-5 (60-61),
STR. 761-783

ČIZMIĆ, J.,
KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
CROATIAN AND...

¹² Ernest J. Burrus: *La obra cartografica de la Provincia Mexicana de la Compañia de Jesús (1567-1967)*, Parte I. (Madrid: Ediciones Jose Porrua Turanzas, 1967), p. 36.

¹³ Janez Stanonik, "Friderik Baraga." *Slovenska izseljenska književnost 2: Severna Amerika* (Janja Žitnik in Helga Glušič, Eds.). (Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, Založba ZRC in Založba Rokus, 1999), p. 391; Jurij Trunk: *Amerika in Amerikanci*. (Celovec: Published by Author, 1912), pp. 544-547.

¹⁴ Tone Zrnec, "Po Baragovih sledovih ob vstopu v tretje tisočletje." *Baragov simpozij v Rimu* (Edo Škulj, Ed.). (Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 2000), p. 282.

¹⁵ Zmago Šmitek, "Friderik Baraga". *Dvanajst velikih Slovencev*. (Ljubljana: Mihelač, 1994), 154.

¹⁶ Verwyst O. F. M.: *Life and Labors of Rt. Rev. Frederic Baraga, First Bishop of Marquette*, Mich. p. 218

¹⁷ Rev. Francis Mischeringer: *Frederic Baraga, Servant of God* (Marquette: Bishop Baraga Association, 1942 p. 33.

¹⁸ Mirjam Kovač, "Friderik Baraga – apostolski vikar." *Baragov simpozij v Rimu* (Edo Škulj, Ed.). (Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 2000), pp. 139-156; Zrnec, *Po Baragovih sledovih ...*, p. 282.

¹⁹ France Baraga, "Baragova bibliografija" *Baragov simpozij v Rimu* (Edo Škulj, Ed.). (Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 2000), pp. 317-330; Šmitek, *Friderik Baraga ...*, p. 162.

²⁰ Stanonik, *Friderik Baraga ...*, pp. 392-393; Kolar, *Baragov odnos do slovenstva ...*, p. 184.

²¹ Verwyst O. F. M.: *Life and Labors of Rt. Rev. Frederic Baraga, First Bishop of Marquette*, Mich., pp. 316-317.

²² Verwyst O. F. M.: *Life and Labors of Rt. Rev. Frederic Baraga, First Bishop of Marquette*, Mich., pp. 318-320.

²³ Zrnec, *Po Baragovih sledovih ...*, p. 282.

²⁴ Šmitek, *Friderik Baraga ...*, pp. 155-160.

²⁵ Matjaž Jančar: *Indijanskih pet stoletij*. (Ljubljana: Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1995), pp. 135-136; Šmitek, *Friderik Baraga ...*, pp. 155-156.

²⁶ Zmago Šmitek, "Baraga, Schoolcraft, and the Beginning of American Ethnology." *European Review of Native American Studies*, 7:2 (1993); Marjan Drnovšek, "Baragov odnos do staroselske civilizacije in kulture v Ameriki." *Baragov simpozij v Rimu* (Edo Škulj, Ed.). (Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 2000), pp. 165-170.

²⁷ Rev. Frederick Baraga: *A Theoretical and Practical Grammar of the Otchipwe Language – For the use of Missionaries*. (Detroit: Jabez Fox printer, 1850).

²⁸ Rev. Frederick Baraga: *A Dictionary of the Otchipwe Language Explained in English – For the Use of Missionaries*. (Cincinnati: Jos. Hermann, Publisher of the "Wahrheitsferund", 1853). Part I (pp. 3-420) Otchipwe-English; Part II (pp. 427-659) English-Otchipwe.

²⁹ A. Slavko Snoj, "Baragovi indijanski spisi." *Baragov simpozij v Rimu* (Edo Škulj, Ed.). (Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 2000), pp. 110-112; Stanonik, *Friderik Baraga ...*, pp. 48-56.

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KLEMENČIĆ, M.:
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³⁰ Friederich Baraga: *Geschichte, Charakter, Sitten und Gebräuche der nord-amerikanischer Indier*. (Laibach, 1837).

³¹ Frederick Baraga: *Abrégé de l'histoire des Indiens de l'Amérique septentrionale*. (Paris: A la Société des Bons Livres, 1837), Imprimerie de E. J. Bailly.

³² Janez Stanonik, "Franc Pirc." *Slovenska izseljenska književnost 2: Severna Amerika* (Janja Žitnik in Helga Glušič, Eds.). (Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, Založba ZRC in Založba Rokus, 1999), pp. 430-432; Trunk, *Amerika in Amerikanci ...*, pp. 578-580.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 430; Trunk, *Amerika in Amerikanci ...*, p. 579.

³⁵ Šmitek, *Friderik Baraga ...*, pp. 152-153.

³⁶ Stanonik, *Franc Pirc ...*, pp. 430-431.

³⁷ *Ibid.*; Šmitek, *Friderik Baraga ...*, p. 154.

³⁸ Šmitek, *Friderik Baraga ...*, p. 154.

³⁹ Stanonik, *Franc Pirc ...*, p. 59, p. 431.

⁴⁰ Trunk, *Amerika in Amerikanci ...*, p. 579.

⁴¹ Vlado Valenčič, "Izseljevanje Slovencev v tujino do druge svetovne vojne". *Dve domovini/Two Homelands 1*. (Ljubljana: Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo ZRC SAZU, 1990), p. 51.

⁴² Stanonik, *Franc Pirc ...*, p. 431.

⁴³ Trunk, *Amerika in Amerikanci ...*, p. 580.

⁴⁴ Stanonik, *Franc Pirc ...*, p. 431.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ William P. Furlan: *In Charity Unfeigned: The Life of Francis Xavier Pierz*. (St. Cloud, Mn.: Diocese of St. Cloud, 1952).

⁴⁷ Šmitek, *Friderik Baraga ...*, pp. 160-161.

⁴⁸ Robert J. Voigt: *Pierzana 1865-1965. The Religious and Secular History of the Community of Pierz*. (St. Cloud, Mn.: Diocese of St. Cloud, 1965); Franc Jaklič: *Slovenski misijonarji, Baragovi nasledniki v Ameriki*. (Celje: Unio cleri, 1931).

⁴⁹ Stanonik, *Franc Pirc ...*, p. 61.

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Hrvatski i slovenski misionari kao izumitelji i istraživači američkog zapada i srednjeg zapada

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U ovom radu istražuju se djela i životi nekih hrvatskih i slovenskih katoličkih svećenika koji su djelovali kao misionari među američkim Indijancima. Američki misionari nisu samo donijeli kršćanstvo američkim Indijancima, nego su bili poznati i kao izumitelji i istraživači, putujući posebno američkim zapadom i srednjim zapadom. Hrvati, velečasni Ivan Ratkaj i Ferdinand Konščak bili su istraživači američkoga i meksičkoga zapada od 1680-ih do kasnih 1760-ih. Potanka promatranja i mjerenja velečasnog Konščaka konačno su potvrdila da Baja California nije otok već poluotok, što je omogućilo daljnje ekspedicije i otkrivanje teritorija današnje države California. Slovenci, biskup Frederick Baraga i velečasni Franz Pirc djelovali su među američkim Indijancima na srednjem zapadu od 1830-ih do 1870-ih godina.

Kroatische und slowenische Missionare als Erfinder und als Entdecker des amerikanischen Westens und Mittelwestens

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Diese Studie widmet sich der Untersuchung von Leben und Werk einiger kroatischer und slowenischer katholischer Priester, die als Missionare bei den nordamerikanischen Indianern lebten. Ihre Aufgabe beschränkte sich nicht allein auf die Christianisierung der Indianer, sondern umfasste auch Erfindungen und Entdeckungen, zumal die Erkundung des amerikanischen Westens und Mittelwestens. Die kroatischen Priester Ivan Ratkaj und Ferdinand Konščak

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erforschten den Westen Nordamerikas und Mexikos in der Zeit von den 80er Jahren des 17. Jahrhunderts bis in die späten 60er Jahre des 18. Jahrhunderts. Konščak's detaillierte Beobachtungen und Messungen bestätigten endgültig, dass Baja California keine Insel, sondern eine Halbinsel ist. Dies schuf die Voraussetzung für weitere Expeditionen und die Erschließung des Territoriums, den heute der US-Bundesstaat Kalifornien bedeckt. Die slowenischen Geistlichen Bischof Frederick Baraga und Franz Pirc lebten von den 30er bis zu den 70er Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts im amerikanischen Mittelwesten, wo sie sich der Missionierung der Indianer widmeten.